

THE **BUSAN** **DAILY** No. 6 **Hollywood** **REPORTER**

THR.COM/BUSAN

OCTOBER 9, 2013



East Meets West at BIFF

Director Lee Sang-il and stars Ken Watanabe and Yuya Yagira arrive in Busan for the gala screening of their remake of Clint Eastwood's classic Western *Unforgiven*



Held in conjunction with



3 - 6 Dec 2013
Marina Bay Sands,
Singapore

ScreenSingapore – Asia's freshest big screen event where film glamour meets cinematic greatness. ScreenSingapore attracts some of the biggest stars and latest productions, and is supported by some of the most credible and respected names in the business. From the premieres to the market to the conferences, expect nothing but the best.

A SPECTRUM OF FILMED ENTERTAINMENT

A single, energetic, engaging space – in one of Asia's **most dynamic business hubs**



Anthony Chen
Director of ILO ILO,
Winner of 2013 Camera
d'or at Cannes Film
Festival, Singapore

Banjong Pisanthanakun
Director of Pee Mak,
Thailand

Choi Yeonu
VP of International Film
Financing & Production,
CJ Entertainment,
South Korea

Kim Min Ki
Producer of Miracle
in Cell No. 7,
South Korea

Nansun Shi
Founder and Chairman,
Distribution Workshop,
Hong Kong

Shekar Kapur
Award-winning Director
& Producer, India

Yu Dong
CEO & Founder,
Bona Film Group, China

Register Now!

Contact us

screensingapore@reedexpo.com.sg
www.screensingapore.com.sg



IT'S WHERE YOU NEED TO BE

THE *Hollywood* REPORTER

OCTOBER 9, 2013 | THR.COM/BUSAN | BUSAN | No6

BUSAN
WEATHER
AND HIGH
TEMPS

TODAY
78° F
26° C



TOMORROW
78° F
26° C



BIFF Buzz Films at the Mid Point

By Elizabeth Kerr and
Clarence Tsui

Leaving behind some of the grimmer material of 2012, the eighteenth edition of the Busan International Film Festival is a decidedly more diverse program, with a handful of themes and styles fighting their way to the forefront.

Best
of the
Fest

While a buzzy favorite has yet to emerge — and it's unlikely to at the mid-point of the festival — a handful of films are generating chatter for a handful of reasons.

BIFF kicked off this year with **Khyentse Norbu's** *Vara: A Blessing* from Bhutan, a country that only recently welcomed television within its borders and whose film industry is among the smallest, if not the smallest, in the world. *Vara* was the subject of curiosity and something of an eyebrow-raiser for supplanting a Korean title for opening night. Regardless of the politics involved, *Vara's* cool reception so far belies the fact that it's a lushly photographed quasi-romance about religious faith, filial obligation and desire in an Indian village. It also marks the welcome return of Norbu, who last graced screens with *Travellers* and *Magicians* a decade ago.

Also causing its share of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

WORLD PREMIERE



Jung, left, and wife
Park try to start
fresh in a new home.

The Dinner

Korean director Kim Dong-hyun returns with a polished and well acted family melodrama BY ELIZABETH KERR

The trials and tribulations of a South Korean family are chronicled in Kim Dong-hyun's latest, *The Dinner*, a soapy, glossy melodrama replete with tragic deaths, divorce, murder and destitution. Closing the 18th Busan International Film Festival, *The Dinner* is a structurally and narratively stronger film than Kim's first feature, *A Shark*, and is at its best when it observes the quiet moments and seemingly minor details of family dynamics. Likely to be a moderate hit at home in Korea, the film could easily find an audience in other parts of Asia where familial expectations and demands are similar, and so resonate, and it should find a healthy life on the festival circuit.

In-cheol (Jung Eui-gap) is the eldest son who's just been laid off from work

and is desperately trying to hold his family together. His retired parents are struggling financially, his younger brother In-ho has yet to find a respectable job and his sister, Gyeong-jin, relies on his help — and the whole family's — in raising her son Jae-hyeon as a single divorced mom. As if that weren't putting enough stress on In-cheol, his wife, Hye-jeong, has some general health problems that are compelling him to move out of Seoul to a better physical environment.

Lee takes his time in setting up the interplay between the family — a conversation about the future over laundry, the pre-occupied siblings' parents sharing a burger in lieu of a proper birthday celebration, the brothers' chat after finding

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

PROMOTION

SEE & BE SEEN ONLINE

THE AMERICAN FILM MARKET IS ONLINE AT THR.COM/AFM

AFM hub features downloadable market dailies,
breaking news and reviews.

E-NEWSLETTERS

Get AFM news in your in-box.

Signup for *THR*'s International and Festival Newsletters at thr.com/newsletters

For advertising opportunities, contact:

EUROPE | Alison Smith | alison.smith@thr.com

Tommasso Campione | tommasso.campione@thr.com

ASIA | Ivy Lam | ivy.lam@thr.com

AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND | Lisa Cruse | lisa@spiritedmedia.co.nz

UNITED STATES | Debra Fink | debra.fink@thr.com

THE
Hollywood
REPORTER

PRINT | DIGITAL | MOBILE | SOCIAL | EVENTS

Buzz Films

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

controversy is **Ahn Seon-kyoung's** *Pascha*, a portrait of a fortyish Seoul woman living, by Korean standards, an alternative lifestyle. The sharply drawn character is a refreshing change of pace in a macho cinema and a desperately needed feminine voice, but Ahn nearly undoes her work with a gratuitous post-abortion scene that plays as a pro-life screed rather than a realistic study of the emotional impact of such a drastic decision. As a result, *Pascha* has been tagged as more memorable than either good or bad.

But the most significant positive chatter so far has been reserved for Asian Filmmaker Award recipient **Rithy Panh** and his innovative, moving and thought-provoking documentary about life under the Khmer Rouge, *The Missing Picture*. Winner of the Prix Un Certain Regard at Cannes in 2013, Panh's autobiographical doc also turns a



Ilo Ilo



Pascha



Transit

critical eye on what has been traditionally accepted in the media about the Pol Pot years in Cambodia and demands viewers re-evaluate what they think they know.

The most prominent theme to emerge from this year's program is the struggle of immigrant workers across Asia. *Scenery* and *Thuy* are just two of the titles that touch on the subject, but **Anthony Chen's** *Ilo Ilo* and **Hannah Espia's** *Transit* are at

the head of the pack for buzz. *Ilo Ilo* expanded on the strong word-of-mouth coming out of Cannes, but *Transit* could be the festival revelation. Currently the unofficial frontrunner in the New Currents competition (and official Philippine Oscar entry), *Transit*, about Filipino laborers in Israel, stands a chance of breaking the New Currents tradition of awarding the prize to non-issue driven films.

Rounding out the festival

on October 12 is *The Dinner* by Korea's **Kim Dong-hyun**, a family melodrama that actually started generating buzz before the festival started. A polished film pivoting on a nearly universal subject — family and sacrifice — *The Dinner* is an exemplar of what BIFF has been aiming to do for almost 20 years, chiefly helping develop the domestic industry and producing mainstream art for audiences both at home and abroad. **THR**

Al Jazeera and BIFF Team for Viewfinder Project

By Patrick Brzeski

Al Jazeera's Viewfinder workshop project for aspiring Asian documentary filmmakers wrapped up a successful second edition at BIFF this week.

Established by the Qatar-based news organization in 2012, Viewfinder nurtures young talent interested in factual storytelling and reporting through a series of educational sessions and hands-on projects overseen by veteran filmmakers. Al Jazeera hopes the program will supply aspiring talent with the tools they need to become eventual professional content providers for the agency.

According to Al Jazeera, the work-



Granny Loan Shark from Thailand is one of eight short films to come out of the first Viewfinder workshop earlier this year.

shop this year received more than 200 applications from upstart directors from more than 20 countries across Asia. This year's ten participants hailed from India, China, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, The Philippines, Macau, Kyrgyzstan and South Korea.

The five mentors included, **Flora Gregory**, **Fiona Lawson-Baker** and **Keith Lynch** from Al Jazeera's flagship observational series, *Witness*, as well as

independent filmmakers **Lynn Lee** and **James Leong** from Lianain Films.

The participants week began with a studied screening of the films produced by last year's class, which broadcast as part of the first Viewfinder Asia series earlier in 2013. After receiving instruction on Al Jazeera's professional standards for story development, observational filming techniques, editing and postproduction processes, each participant produced a short segment shot in Busan. They variously filmed high school fans rabidly chasing their idols on Haeundae beach, a model trying to fix her broken shoe, and an elderly fisherman angling for the morning's catch at the beach.

"It was a great gathering of filmmakers and everyone is very excited about the potential of these stories from Asia for Al Jazeera's global audience," said Fiona Lawson-Baker. **THR**

ASIA IN BRIEF

SOUTH KOREAN MOVIES SET RECORD - AGAIN

South Korean films brought in 100 million admissions for the second time after reaching the milestone last year, the Korean Film Council announced Oct. 5. Local titles also enjoyed record box office sales for a given quarter this past July-September, bringing in 4.325 million admissions. Korean blockbusters including *Snowpiercer* (9.3 million admissions) and *The Face Reader* (8.7 million) accounted for the top 7 highest grossing titles of the third quarter.

KOREA AND CHINA TO FINALIZE CO-PRODUCTION PACT

A new pact will allow joint productions by Korea and China to be treated as local movies in the Chinese market, which has an annual quota for foreign films. South Korea and China are set to sign the agreement Oct. 23 in Beijing, a Seoul government official said Tuesday. Korea Culture Minister **Yoo Jin-ryong** will meet with **Cai Fuchao**, head of China's State General Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television, for the treaty that is expected to help Korean movies make further inroads into the Chinese film market.

IRON MAN COMING TO HONG KONG

Hong Kong Disneyland has announced a new themed area based on *Iron Man*. The anchor of the attraction is the Iron Man Experience, where guests will be able to take flight with Iron Man. "Combined with Toy Story Land, Grizzly Gulch and Mystic Point, this new themed area underscores commitment to and confidence in the continued growth of Hong Kong Disneyland," said **Tom Staggs**, chairman of Walt Disney Parks and Resorts. **THR**



Directors Neil Jordan, left, and Jim Sheridan attend the Irish Reception at O'Kim's in the Westin Chosun Hotel

Ireland's 'Rogues, Rebels and Romantics' Descend on Busan

By Clifford Coonan

Sailors from the USS George Washington rubbed shoulders with Irish filmmakers at the Busan International Film Festival, even overlapping at one point during Asia's biggest film festival.

"We ran into a whole group of Marines, all built like tanks. When one heard we were Irish, he started talking about *Michael Collins*, so I told him I directed it. We got on very well," said Irish director **Neil Jordan**.

"The reason I came here to Busan was because it's the focus for Asian cinema, and for the last 15 years the Asian industry has been really dynamic."

"There is an excitement here about genre films. And they have the things necessary for a cinema — they've got money, they've got an audience and they've got a buzz going," added Jordan, who is best known in Korea for *The Crying Game* and his earlier werewolf classic, *The Company of Wolves*.

Jordan is part of a group of leading talents promoting Ireland as part of Busan's special focus on the Emerald Isle called Rogues, Rebels and Romantics. The Irish contingent also includes veteran helmer **Jim Sheridan** (*My Left Foot*, *In America*) as well as emerging filmmakers **Lance Daly** (*Life's a Breeze*), **Brendan Muldowney** (*Love Eternal*) and **John Butler** (*The Stag*), plus Irish comedian **Pat Shortt**.

In all, 11 films by Irish filmmakers were chosen for the fest, and Ireland's ambassador **Aingel O'Donoghue** opened the season at an event in the O'Kim's Irish bar at Busan.

Director Sheridan says Irish filmmakers have a lot to learn from

the Korean industry.

"We've got to broaden our horizons and start being in the modern world. Business-wise we can definitely learn from Korea, these guys are like killers," he said.

While in Busan, Sheridan gave a master class and was chosen for a hand-printing event which celebrates a filmmaker's career.

Sheridan says Irish filmmakers need to be more aggressive about competing on the global stage.

"If the American studios are just making movies for India or China, then can't we do that?" is asks. "We have to get out of our safety zone. Cinema in Ireland is underrepresented compared to say theatre. We need to be a bit madder, less language-based, more images."

At an earlier panel meeting during the festival, Sheridan bemoaned how each industrial advance simplified the cinematic medium and made it less interesting.

"There is the tsunami of the modern Internet which me and the Directors' Guild try to fight," he said.

Sheridan added that while the movies were more violent than he would normally make, he is impressed by Korea's ability to make outward-looking, commercial movies. "It's very impressive here [at Busan]. This seems bigger than Cannes, just judging like for like, or as big as Toronto, it's at least on that level," he said.

Teresa McGrane, head of business affairs at the Irish Film Board, says it took four years to build a relationship with **Jay Jeon**, deputy festival director to help secure the festival slot.

"It's quite hard to break into Asia, but using a platform like this it highlights the industry and we gain penetration," she says. "We'd like to build on Busan and also like to build our regional penetration out of Singapore." **THR**

Bong Joon Ho

The South Korean director discusses bringing his sci-fi fantasy blockbuster *Snowpiercer* to the big screen, the temptation to go Hollywood and what he's planning as his follow up By Lee Hyo-won

BONG JOON HO'S FIRST English-language film *Snowpiercer* is widely misunderstood to be the South Korean helmer's Hollywood debut. The \$40 million project is fully backed by local giant CJ Entertainment, and is the country's most expensive film to date as well as one of the year's most successful titles, with 9.3 million admissions and counting. Though the budget is more befitting for an indie film in the United States, the true value of the sci-fi fantasy can be measured by how it presents new production models for the increasingly globalized film industry.

Bringing together top actors from Song Kang-ho and Tilda Swinton to Chris Evans and Ed Harris, the film has already been sold to 167 countries — a record for Korean cinema.

Bong sat down with *The Hollywood Reporter* to discuss the international relevance of *Snowpiercer* ahead of its release in territories outside Korea.

What was it like to work with an international cast and crew?

Snowpiercer is basically a Korean film that hired foreign cast and crew members, but nationality was not as important as the shared goal of working together toward creating a good film. But what I do think is meaningful is that there will be an increasing number of projects like *Snowpiercer* that bring together Korean

directors and actors with foreign cast and crew. This I believe will allow for a more diverse range of works to be made, not only for Korean cinema but for other film industries. On a personal note, it was great to work with non-Korean actors I've been a big fan of.

Snowpiercer is based on the French graphic novel *Le Transperceneige*. Why did you decide to adapt it?

I stumbled upon it by chance at an old bookstore in Seoul in 2005. I was completely absorbed and finished it standing there. Interestingly enough the 1986 original has only been translated into Korean. The original plotline is quite different from the film, but I was drawn to this whole idea of a train. I was able to discern a unique, cinematic sensibility and color that I thought could be translated audiovisually.

What was the planning like?

There was a lot of planning involved, including six months of initial discussions in Korea before the six-month preproduction process began in the Czech Republic. *Snowpiercer* combined Korean and U.S.

VITAL STATS

Nationality South Korean
Born September 14, 1969
Film in Busan
Snowpiercer
Selected Filmography
Mother (2009), *The Host* (2006), *Memories of Murder* (2003)



Says Bong: "*Snowpiercer* is a sci-fi fantasy but it's really a simplified and dramatized portrayal of contemporary society as we know it."

production procedures, and I think we were able to bring the best of both worlds.

The film is often mistaken to be your Hollywood debut. Do you have plans to actually cross over to the U.S.?

Directors Park Chan-wook [the *Oldboy* director is a producer for *Snowpiercer*] and Kim Jee-woon have made their Hollywood debuts, and I think it's impressive because the production system is very different, very bureaucratic from what I hear. I'm very much used to controlling everything from writing the script to casting and editing. I even draw my own storyboards. Maybe I'm not as professional as [Park or Kim] to adapt to different production systems. But I think it's a matter of finding a good project in the U.S. I have an agent there.

I've received a lot of great proposals and came across some really creative scripts.

What are you working on now?

I've been working on *Okja*, which is about the adventures of a very unique woman. It will most likely be set in Korea and the U.S. with a mix of Korean and English dialogue. But I'm not sure if this will be my very next project. I don't wish to work on anything with a bigger than *Snowpiercer*, though the budget was pretty tight for it. It was the largest project I've worked on and I'd like to work on smaller films now. I'd prefer depicting worlds with more freedom to pay attention to details. I'm a small-scale person, and I'd rather work with a smaller budget if it means having more freedom. **THR**

REVIEWS



The family at the center of *The Dinner* enjoys a rare moment of happiness.

The Dinner

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

out they've stooped to the same job — and lets the characters reveal who they are organically. There's nothing flashy or trendy in Lee Jin-keun's cinematography (and the material really doesn't demand it), but nonetheless a television drama tone lingers over the entire running time of *The Din-*

ner. But it's forgivable due to the cast's ability to bounce off each other in a wholly recognizable way. Jung gives In-cheol a put-upon, hangdog demeanor that he clearly wants to hide from everyone. He takes a job with a driver service to make ends meet and as a way to continue doing right by his parents.

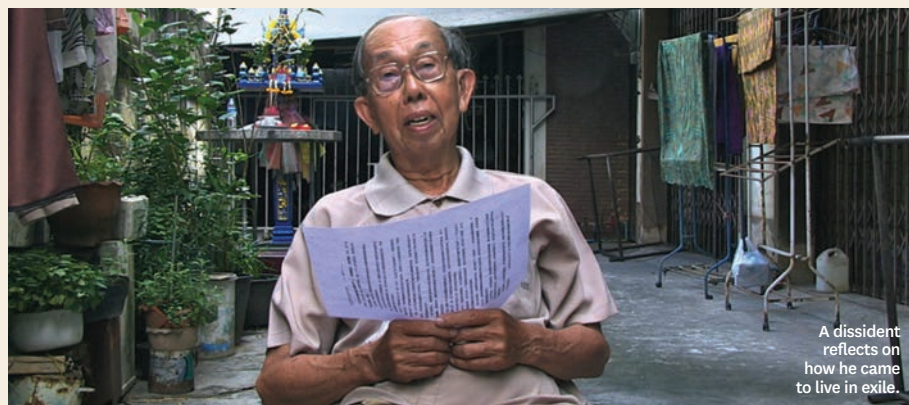
And that's where *The Dinner* takes a turn for the melodramatic. In-ho also works for the service, and after he accidentally kills a rude client, he calls In-cheol for help. That's just the first in a series of tragedies that befall the family. Unable to bear the guilt of his actions, In-ho completely unravels psychologically (and quite histrionically), and yet another fragile creature, Gyeong-jin, meets an early end. That sets off a custody battle for Jae-hyeon, the one ray of sunshine the family can rely on. Lee flirts dangerously with emotional excess with about four endings too many, but ultimately *The Dinner* manages to come to rest on a last, tragic grace note that seals the story the only way it could rather than shoehorning in a happier ending.

Closing Night Film

Cast Jung Eui-gap, Park Se-jin, Jeon Kwang-jin, Lee Eu-joo

Director Kim Dong-hyun

125 minutes



A dissident reflects on how he came to live in exile.

To Singapore, With Love

Documentarian Tan Pin Pin profiles Singaporeans who fled their country in the 1960s and 1970s for fear of being arrested for their political beliefs BY CLARENCE TSUI

Asked by one of the interviewees in her latest documentary whether Singaporean censors have intruded on her work, Tan Pin Pin says only one of her films has run into problems with the regulators. With *To Singapore, With Love*, Tan has certainly doubled that number. It's hardly likely that the country's officials will approve domestic screenings of this piece about Singaporean political ac-

tivists and dissidents living in self-exile after standing up to Lee Kuan Yew's authoritarian rule in the 1960s and 70s.

The man fielding Tan with that censorship question is Tan Wah Piow, who jokes that sometimes he loses count of how long he has been living in Britain. The now west London-based solicitor actually left Singapore in 1976, when his fervent advocacy for

labor rights as a student activist had the system "coming down very heavily" on him. He is just one of *To Singapore, With Love*'s examples of young idealists falling foul of a highly repressive order which wields an Internal Security Act to freely detain dissidents without trial, some even for decades. Ho Juan Thai says he left Singapore in 1977 when his failed election campaign called for a less English-centric curriculum. Ang Swee Chai was a young doctor when she left for London with lawyer husband Francis Khoo after their support for prosecuted unionists. And then there were their precedents: Wong Soo Fung, Chan Sun Wing, Tan Hee Kim and Yap Wan Pin, who all left for Thailand in the 1960s because of their left-wing sympathies and have now actually become Thai citizens.

In some ways *To Singapore, With Love* is a love letter to these dissidents' estranged birthplace, but it is also Tan's account of a dark age which hopefully will not to be repeated again.

Wide Angle

Director Tan Pin Pin

70 minutes



Sakuljaroensuk is trapped in a directionless life.

Concrete Clouds

This relationship drama set against the Asian financial crisis of the late 90s fails to pay dividends

BY ELIZABETH KERR

The defining 1997 Asian financial crisis in Bangkok is the time and place for writer-director Lee Chatametikool's semi-autobiographical *Concrete Clouds*, yet another in the long line of reflective and largely inert meditations on time, memory and lost relationships that have come out of Southeast Asia in the last decade. Produced by regional heavy hitters like Sylvia Chang and Apichatpong Weerasethakul among others, Chatametikool's debut recalls the themes and tone of this year's *Toilet Blues*, *The Journals of Musan*, *Wonderful Town* and *This Charming Girl* and will play to the exact same festivals that those films did.

Currency trader Mutt (Ananda Everingham) is living in Manhattan when Asia melts down. When his father commits suicide he returns to Bangkok to find a cityscape now dotted with the shells of abandoned buildings, mirroring the collapse of the economy. The funeral brings Mutt together with an old girlfriend, Sai (Janesuda Parnto), which then proceeds to bring up memories of their failed romance as they flirt with rekindling it. At the same time, Mutt's younger emo brother Nic (Prawith Hansten) gets into a fragile relationship with a neighbor, Poupee (Apinya Sakuljaroensuk), a bar girl.

Concrete Clouds is far from inept but it's so familiar in its exploration of the effect of time on memory and relationships, and so conventional in its subject matter, it becomes distancing. The earlier financial crisis is a complex period that could add a layer of depth and nuance to the story, but it remains on the periphery. Though Chatametikool claims to have been inspired by his own return to Bangkok in '97, *Concrete Clouds* could have been better served by a more personal touch.

New Currents

Cast Ananda Everingham, Apinya Sakuljaroensuk

Director Lee Chatametikool // 99 minutes

Miss Zombie

Japanese actor-director Sabu returns to his pop roots with a novel spin on the zombie flick

BY ELIZABETH KERR

Leave it to Japanese director Sabu to take an increasingly worn out trend and all its tropes and turn it on its head to create something uniquely Sabu. The filmmaker's latest is *Miss Zombie*, a willfully low budget, esoteric thriller that uses the zombie craze as a way to reflect on humanity, marginalization and injustice, and of course who's more monstrous, us or them. Working with some of the intensely recognizable conventions of the form — the shuffling gait, the dead eyes, the swarming — the director simultaneously honors its traditions and jettisons them.

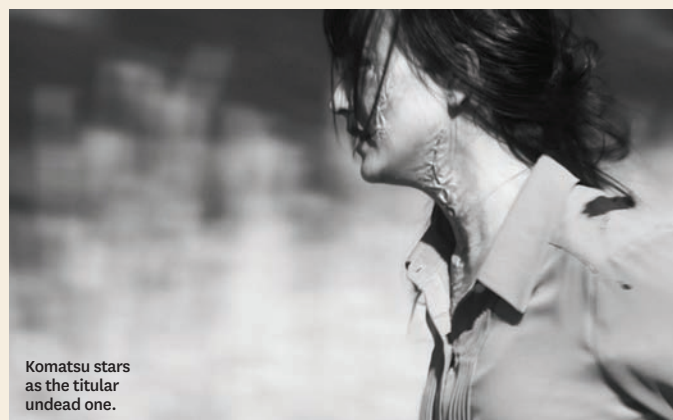
Sabu has made a career out of reimagining standard genre fare, from his breakout heist thriller *D.A.N.G.E.R. Runner* and boy band comedy *Hard Luck Hero*, but he's most recently dealt in straight ahead drama, such as *Dead Run*. In *Miss Zombie*, he combines the two to gloriously weird effect, marrying art with geek culture.

In Sabu's zombie-verse, zombie-ism is a virus that anyone can be a carrier of. Teramoto (Tezuka Toru),

an affluent Japanese doctor takes delivery of a rare and wondrous zombie (Komatsu Ayuka), which comes complete with an instruction manual for care — the most crucial of which is to not to feed her any meat. The family houses her in a storage locker in town but keeps her as a housekeeper, though she spends most of her time scrubbing the driveway with a wire brush. She's subjected to name-calling and physical abuse by local kids and wannabe cool teens, and as soon as the men in the town realize just how docile she is, she becomes a sexual plaything, effectively making her even more of a zombie than she already is.

Shot in decidedly unbloody, stark black and white by Souma Daisuke and featuring minimal dialogue, it's clear early on that there's more to *Miss Zombie* than it would appear. Watching her regain her humanity begs the question of if she ever really lost it.

A Window on Asian Cinema
Cast Komatsu Ayuka, Togashi Makoto, Tezuka Toru
Director Sabu
86 minutes



Komatsu stars as the titular undead one.

The King of Jokgu

Woo Moon-gi delivers an endearing celebration of youth with a story about a university student's unyielding efforts to thrive in sports and love

BY CLARENCE TSUI

Revolving around a young man's starry-eyed, persistent pursuit of a much-ridiculed sport and a girl seemingly out of his league, Woo Moon-gi's directorial debut is commendable for not trying to mine easy laughs.

Eschewing the over-the-top wackiness which mainstream Korean games-driven comedies readily stoop to — manga and Stephen Chow have a lot to answer for on this — *The King of Jokgu* is grounded more on an empathy with earthy characters who are more than just gag-spouting ciphers.

Its indie roots might not point the film to a blockbuster performance, but a healthy return should be easily attainable if enough young men are to buy into

the film, factoring in how the titular game — which can be described as volleyball played with feet and heads — is a staple pastime in Korean military barracks.

And the film begins exactly in such a game, when the master player Hanseob (Ahn Jae-hong) is told of his immediate discharge. Returning to civilian life, he resumes his aborted studies and attempts to rejuvenate a game which has somehow attained a stigma among a cynical student population, while at the same time trying to attain his self-proclaimed college-era aim to fall in love by courting Anna (Hwang Seung-un), the prom-queen of the school.

An underdog's victory is



Ahn hopes to fall in love while at college.

nearly inevitable, but what makes Woo's film a breakout is his development of characters which go well beyond mere caricatures, and a storyline which veers off on cartoonish tangents. It explores how young former conscripts struggle to navigate their way into everyday life; in a wider context, it celebrates earnest and innocent youth. All this makes

Hanseob's English-language declaration of love to Anna — disguised as part of an in-class acting exercise — elude being corny: it's the most engaging part of what is a truly endearing dramedy.

Korea Cinema Today

Cast Ahn Jae-hong, Hwang Seung-un, Jung Woo-sik

Director Woo Moon-gi
100 minutes



Dugal plays wife to Shome's conflicted husband.

Qissa

India's patriarchal values take center stage with a story about a young woman being raised as her family's sole male heir

BY CLARENCE TSUI

Given the fervent uproar in India in recent months about the sexual oppression faced by the country's female population, *Qissa* could have been a timely addition to the debate, with its story about how a young woman's

twisted rite of passage into adulthood after being raised as a boy by a tyrant of a father. But what's shaped as a substantial and poised piece, however, is eventually undermined by a final, inexplicable leap into the paranormal — an odd denouement for a narrative centered on the most corporeal issue of gender-based violence.

Based on his own insights growing up in a village in Indian Punjab, Anup Singh has accorded *Qissa* with a historical and social framework which sets out to highlight how friction lines in India lie beyond merely religious denominations. With the story revolving around how Umber Khan (Irrfan Khan, *The Life of Pi*) is obsessed with having a son to continue his clan's near-vanquished bloodline, *Qissa* brings to the fore how the violent fallout of the deadly Indo-Pakistan Partition in 1947 can be more sex-based than just sectarian.

Umber's disappointment in having

a fourth daughter drives him to extreme measures, as he turns to bringing her up as male. All this turns daughter Kanwar (Tillotama Shome) into a very torn and troubled being: confused and repressed, she adopts a chauvinist veneer, which eventually leads her into a rut as she is forced to marry Neeli (Rasika Dugal), a girl she's flirting with.

But while the film tracks its protagonist's sexuality schisms well, Singh's brazen move into the supernatural derails any possibility of allowing a glimpse into the seemingly irresolvable issue of female emancipation in a heavily misogynist world. With *Qissa*'s polished production values, it's a shame the drive of Singh's argument is not sustained to the very end.

A Window on Asian Cinema

Cast Irrfan Khan, Tillotama Shome, Rasika Dugal

Director Anup Singh // 109 minutes



Former dictators are sentenced to death.

Non-fiction Diary

Jung Yoo-suk's documentary revisits a serial-killer case in 1994 to explore South Korea's dysfunctional political system BY CLARENCE TSUI

For those who loved the South Korean serial-killer drama *Memories of Murder*, *Non-fiction Diary* is essential viewing. As if providing a real-life corollary to Bong Joon-ho's film about how rule-by-amorality spawns horror on the ground, Jung Yoo-suk's first feature-length documentary delivers a cerebral and damning critique of the twisted values running rampant in a country lurching towards a neo-liberalist, corporate-driven future in the 1990s.

Jung's film is masterful in how it connects three seemingly independent traumatic episodes in the country's history in the mid-1990s — a spate of horrific murders targeting people driving a certain kind of sedan, the collapse of a bridge in Seoul, and a multi-storied department store caving in on itself — and examines how they complete a picture of the moral corruption and staggering incompetence which defines the modus operandi of the South Korean political elite.

Central to *Non-fiction Diary* is what sounds like one of the most implausible crimes of the modern age, when a group of young men calling themselves the Jijon-pa ("Supreme Gangsters" in Korean) abducted people, killed them after torture sessions and then burned their remains in self-made incinerators.

The film offers insights about how these events unfold in the sharply tumultuous political climate. It was, after all, around the time when democracy returned to South Korea, and former military dictators were tried, sentenced to death and then had that nixed on appeal. *Non-fiction Diary* offers an unbelievable but ongoing narrative, murderous a nightmare that Jung insists still recur today.

Wide Angle

Director Jung Yoo-suk
90 minutes

Unforgiven

A solid Japanese remake of Clint Eastwood's Western classic trades guns for swords

BY TODD MCCARTHY

In a cross-cultural acknowledgment of his debt to Japanese cinema for the source of his breakthrough film, *A Fistful of Dollars*, Clint Eastwood, along with Warner Bros., authorized this solid remake of his 1992 classic *Unforgiven*. As before, the tale centers on a grizzled killer with much blood on his hands who, having promised his late wife to reform and not kill again, struggles to keep a little farm going while raising two young kids. The lonely patch of land where Jubei (Ken Watanabe) battles the elements is near the sea and now, in the 1880s and more than a decade after the Meiji Restoration has resulted in the reunification of Japan, the chilly area remains a bastion for scattered remnants of the former shogun's samurai army.

As before, this charged, sorrowful tale of men playing out fates to which their natures destine them begins with the mutilation of a prostitute in a village brothel. When local authorities fail to dispense proper justice, the other ladies post a 1000 yen reward to anyone who will make sure the two guilty brothers get what's coming to them. The offer eagerly is embraced by old coot Kingo (Akira Emoto, in Morgan Freeman's part), who twists his old samurai colleague's arm to join him in splitting the reward, something Jubei could sorely use. The older men share some significant history, having killed the emperor's pursuit team as members of the shogun's personal guard,



Watanabe assumes the Eastwood role.

a past that will not be appreciated by fanatical police chief Ichizo (Koichi Sato, the Gene Hackman equivalent) who's now in charge of the area.

While watching this remake, one recalls how much the iconography of Eastwood, his position as the last of the great Western stars and the legacy of the genre informed so much of what *Unforgiven* was all about.

As the trio makes its way toward its date with destiny, Ichizo's sadism is played up, as it is particularly visited upon an engaging old-timer (Jun Kunita, in the Richard Harris role) through some prolonged beatings and torture. The prostitutes are well integrated into the fabric of the community and story, and the ending is a showier affair this time around.

Standing on its own, this *Unforgiven* is perfectly watchable, even decent. But it will always be but a footnote.

Gala Presentation

Cast Ken Watanabe, Akira Emoto, Koichi Sato, Yuya Yagira, Jun Kunita
Director Lee Sang-il
135 minutes

OPENING DOORS



meet the european film industry

at the Asian Film Market
October 7-10, 2013

EUROPE'S UMBRELLA STAND F23
at BEXCO (Centum area)

Austria
EastWest Filmdistribution

Denmark
TrustNordisk
LevelK

France
Bac Films Distribution
Capricci
Celluloid Dreams
Doc & Film International
Films Distribution
Gaumont
Kinology
Le Pacte
Les Films du Losange
Memento Films
Premium Films
REEL SUSPECTS
uniFrance films
Urban Distribution International
Versatile
Wide House
WIDE
Wild Bunch

Germany
Beta Cinema
Films Boutique
m-appeal world sales
Picture Tree International
Sola Media

Ireland
Irish Film Board

Italy
Fandango
Intramovies
Istituto Luce-Cinecittà

Poland
New Europe Film Sales

Serbia
Film Center Serbia

Spain
Film Factory Entertainment
Latido

Sweden
Swedish Film Institute

Sweden / Finland
The Yellow Affair

Switzerland
Swiss Films

United Kingdom
Taskovski Films
WestEnd Films



www.efp-online.com

with the support of the EU MEDIA programme



EFP is supported by

